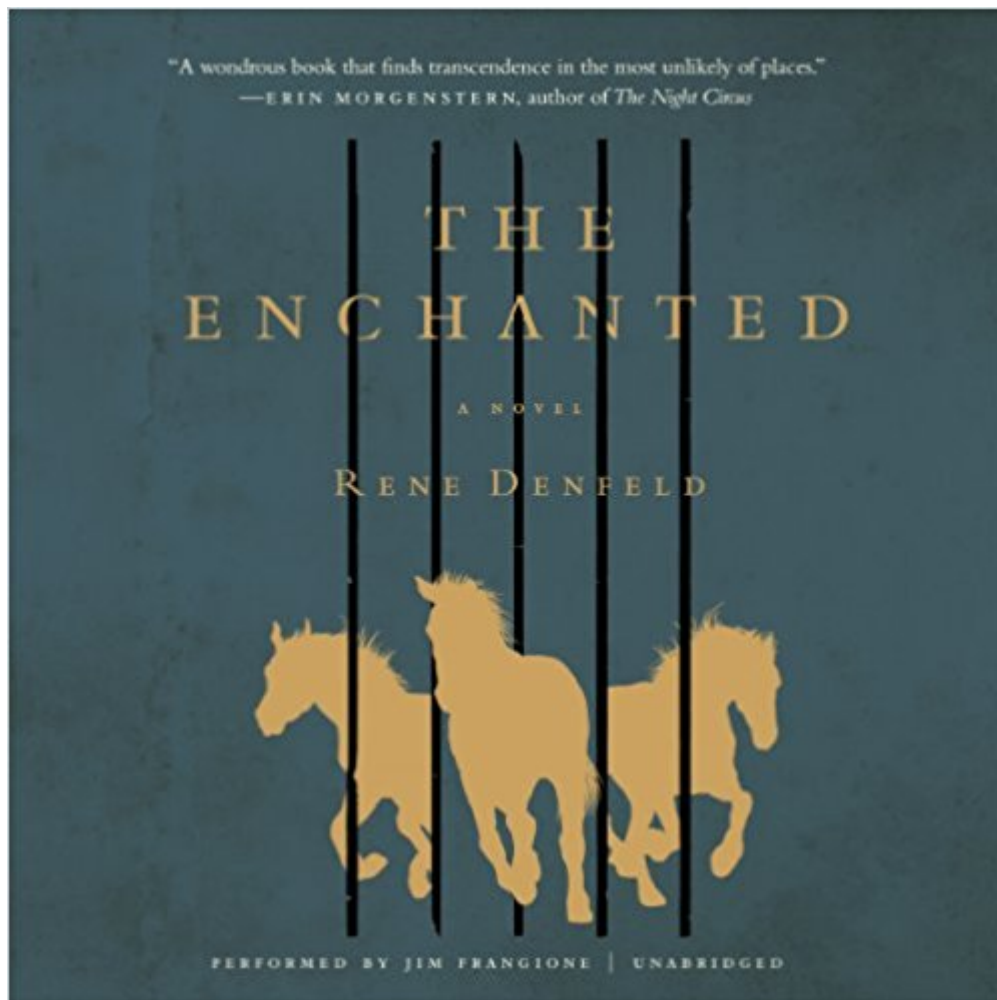


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The Enchanted: A Novel



Synopsis

[Read by Jim Frangione] A wondrous and redemptive debut novel set in a stark world where evil and magic coincide, *The Enchanted* combines the empathy and lyricism of Alice Sebold with the dark, imaginative power of Stephen King. -- "This is an enchanted place. Others don't see it, but I do." -- The enchanted place is an ancient stone prison, viewed through the eyes of a death row inmate who finds escape in his books and in reimagining life around him, weaving a fantastical story of the people he observes and the world he inhabits. Fearful and reclusive, he senses what others cannot. Though bars confine him every minute of every day, he marries visions of golden horses running beneath the prison, heat flowing like molten metal from their backs with the devastating violence of prison life. -- Two outsiders venture here: a fallen priest and the Lady, an investigator who searches for buried information from prisoners' pasts that can save those soon to be executed. Digging into the background of a killer named York, she uncovers wrenching truths that challenge familiar notions of victim and criminal, innocence and guilt, honesty and corruption--ultimately revealing shocking secrets of her own. -- Beautiful and transcendent, *The Enchanted* reminds us of how our humanity connects us all, and how beauty and love exist even amid the most nightmarish reality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month, March 2014: Journalist Rene Denfeld channels her experience as a death penalty case investigator into a gut-wrenching, spellbinding debut novel. *The Enchanted* goes deep inside a decaying prison where we meet York, a death row inmate who is on the verge of execution, and "The Lady," an investigator who (against York's wishes) delves into his history in an

attempt to have his sentence reduced. What she finds is far from pretty, revealing parallels to her own awful past. There are others, none without tragedy. But their morbid, often unrepentantly violent stories are balanced with moments of emotional escape--poetic beauty from outside the prison and strange explanations from within. These magical aspects, or "enchanted things," are the sensational imaginings of an unhinged, unnamed inmate--York's prison neighbor and our narrator. His is a unique perspective--one that is at once irrational and insightful, driving the plot and providing context and description beyond the walls of the prison and beyond the realms of reality. The result is captivating and perplexing. Given such dark subjects, "enjoying" *The Enchanted* may feel uncomfortable, but there's no crime in embracing Denfeld's ability to evoke empathy for seemingly undeserving characters and inspire wonder within an unlikely place. --Robin A. Rothman

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In her evocative first novel, *Denfeld*, a boxer and author of the hard-hitting nonfiction book, *All God's Children: Inside the Dark and Violent World of America's Street Families* (2007), seeks to revolutionize our perception of convicts. One of three nameless narrators, a man on death row, states that prison is a place of enchantment. He convincingly describes the mythic beauty of his dank dungeon before introducing the other two mysterious speakers, the jail's fallen priest and a woman hired to exonerate the condemned men. Referred to only as "the lady," she serves as the plot's catalyst. She is enlisted to spare an inmate named York, who was doomed to misery long before he became a criminal. Denfeld's humanizing of the potential for horror that is within all of us and her insistence that the reader see the beauty in the darkest corners of life sizzles through her sharp prose, which both makes us flinch and invites us to imagine. Those familiar with the world of corrections will especially appreciate Denfeld's nuanced portrait of prison life. --Amber Peckham

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The book is very well written. The characters are developed and presented clearly. There's not much plot but, then, it's not really a "story" in the truest sense of that word. It's more documentary or narrative. However, I can't finish it. I've read in sessions of a chapter or two but I've given up. It simply is too depressing. I know I should educate myself and try to do something about prison conditions. I hope this book is a gross exaggeration but I'm guessing not. But since there is nothing really that I can do about any of it other than vote for those people I think are honorable and human, I don't want to sit down and absorb thoughts of the kind presented in this book. It is just too depressing to read about such dehumanizing situations and people. It's in the nature of a studious

report that should be presented to legislatures for immediate action. But it won't be - legislatures follow the whims of their constituents and certainly don't want to appear soft on crime or criminals.

This book uses an oddly omniscient first person, sometimes almost third person, narrative voice which makes it a real treat to read. It offers a fascinating look into the inside of the prisons that we forget about on a daily basis. My writing class had the pleasure of speaking to Rene over Skype and it was great to hear how her own experiences influenced the stories told in this book.

Atmospheric and a bit odd, tells of a voluntary mute imprisoned for a crime too terrible for speech, and the lives of those around him. How we get from here to there

This author weaves magic with words. It's the dreamiest novel that I've ever read since *Dandelion Wine*, although the subject matter could not be more different. The tone and the feel of this work is extremely far removed from the subject matter - but you know the reality behind the words. I highly recommend this.

Very few books capture me the way *The Enchanted* did. A deep, dark story about death row prison inmates written so beautifully that even though you are aware of the horrors they have inflicted on others, somehow, they creep into you and empathy comes forth towards them. I loved this book from the first page and hungrily read through it without putting it down. All of us can identify with some of the damaged characters in this book and what goes through their minds. After all, we are all damaged characters in some way. Poetically written, deep, lovely, sad, dark, emotional....all of these words describe *The Enchanted*. A book worth the ride.

This was a very good (and pretty creepy) first novel. The authors background in working with death row inmates clearly was a plus in helping make some of the scenes of prison life crackle, but a few of the inmates seemed a little "Green Mile" for my taste. What set this book above some other books that I've read set in prison was this weird undercurrent of fantasy that popped up frequently. Horses thundering through the Yard, little men in the walls - it was interesting, but a little disconcerting. This is a quick read that will stay in your head for a while after you're done.

I loved this book! I had to rate the mood as dark because it takes place on death row and some very grim stories are told related to some death row killers. However, at the same time, the book

managed to convey hope through the believably drawn characters and the gorgeous, lyrical language. The book reminds me somewhat of the movie "It's a Beautiful Life," which found hope in a concentration camp, and "The Road," by Cormac McCarthy, which conveyed hope in an apocalyptic world.

Exquisite prose that transports the reader into this enchanted place of limitless beauty and cruelty...& everything that exists between. A unique & immersive read with an ending that I did not see coming. Loved it...definitely my favorite read of 2015!

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